DWeb Weekend 2025 - Saturday 8/16/2025

Roundtable Discussion 1.2

Title: *P2P vs power imbalance*
Time: *11:15 - 12:00*
Attendees: *X, Y*
Note taker: *Z*

Please add your /initials/ at the front of a comment

General Notes

Eric: Deep why. Difficult to frame it positively. What consequences, emrgent properties. What we found:

Mutuable power ... (long sentence follows)

- "we want a media where we can compose the power imbalance we want", instead of media compoose the power imbalance
- uncapturable spaces - enables agencies

Three mergent properties:

- creativity
- collectivity
- uncapturablilty: (a) enabled by membranes (b) walk-away without losing social context

Dave: We want to create digital communities that reflect the complexity of real-world communities. There is no global town square, but a large set of overlapping smaller communities.

Scott (nanomonkey): explain membranes?

Dave: membrane related to context, mjust be made available and must be evolvable

Srayan: take Discord - how to have it P2P with moderation. Discussion and suggestion (Mix): do walk-away

Mix: walk-away, as a community. In client/server, moving a community is quite hard. Take github-to-gitlab migration: code can be transferred but not the member knowledge

Scott (nanomonkey): The right to not listen. I don't have to throw you out of a group, I can just remove you from my feed. I have more control over my client and the feed that I'm getting.

Srayan: If individuals have to block everyone individually, it's difficult deal with bad actors

Scott (nanomonkey): You could use allowlists, for example.

Santi: *had a good point but we couldn't type fast enough*

Dave: Allowlist/denylist style moderation is about the best we can do in a centralized platform where everyone is in the same place.

Christian: relates to concept of "subjective reader" in Secure Scuttlebutt - the individuals make the filtering, not an algorithm or a moderator. Still freedom to pull curation by others (black- and whitelists). Has interesting technical challenges ("convergence of the materialized data view") and users being aware that the materialization will have holes.

Mix: Moderation is power. We want to explore different ways of moderating and making sense as a group.

Eric: What are the grammatics of power imbalance for collective groups? What are the power imbalances around curation, joining, deletion, etc.?

Scott2: Why would the ultimate freedom of letting groups leave at will not create the circumstances for corruption or the "vampire problem"?

Dave: Is the blast radius of your corruption scenario bigger or smaller than Elon Musk buying Twitter?

Mix: Another lens: My experience with working with people in community is that when you say "p2p" they're like "what's the point?". What's the "why?" that you can explain in 1 or 2 sentences. The tech aspects don't land as a story for other people.

Scott2: The best I've come up with is "building the 'we' economy."

Scott (nanonmonkey): Owning your own infrastructure is an important piece.

Nels: *missed this, sorry*

Christian: Academic speech is a control structure, allowing some speech being accepted and other not, both on a person level and content. See Foucault, sociologist. Need power imbalance to keep the good values of academia, despite critical elements of having such power. On a technical level: We've implemented a blog CRDT with moderation so as a blog owner you can block trolls ("promote legit comment, demote others"). It's not about making imbalances disappear, but to support them and being able to change them (alternative publication systems, open-peer-review etc)

Eric: The imbalance shouldn't drive the substrate.

Scott (nanomonkey): There are natural power structures.

Christian: In academia we are discussing how to do things like fixing clique forming in peer review and exploring more open review.

Dave: I think you're saying that we should be free to form new organizational structures that work for us.

Nels: There are two ways of categorizing this. One way is knowledge/capacity and the other is purpose based.

...

Christian: being a "role model" often comes with (power) imbalance, even

requires it.

Eric: parents MUST have power, for educating their kids.

...

Srayan: How do you deal with the misinformation problem?

Dave: Part of the way this happened in the first place is that big tech has captured massive social networks. Smaller community spaces are inherently more resilient to this.

Scott2: *said something very interesting but I couldn't type fast enough*

Summary to be reported to the other DWeb Weekend participants

a)

b)

c)

name of the reporter